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...
WE'LL LEAVE HIM IN THE BACK SEAT FOR THE TIME BEING...
WHAT ABOUT THE KID?
...THAT KOSAKA HAD...
...A WIFE AND ONE SON....
shf
COULD THIS BE KOSAKA'S HOUSE?
I REMEMBER HEARING...
UH... OKAY.
IT'S DEEPER THAN I THOUGHT.
YOU SHOULD PROBABLY GO TO THE HOSPITAL WITH THE KID...
—!

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ISN'T THAT...
...SORT OF WEIRD?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I MEAN IT'S UNNATURAL.
THERE'S NO BLOOD...
...SPATTERED ON THE LIGHTER.
WHICH MEANS IT MUST'VE BEEN DROPPED AFTER THE MURDER.
BUT... IT'S ALMOST AS IF...
...IT WERE INTENTIONALLY PUT THERE...
...IN A PLACE THAT WOULD BE EASY TO SPOT.
YES... I FELT INCREDIBLY ILL AT EASE.
AND...
FORENSICS WILL TAKE CARE OF THE REST.
YOU SHOULD GO.
...THE BEGINNING OF DESPAIR.
AKI.
HEY, AKI!

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THEY DIDN'T FIND ANY FINGER-PRINTS ON IT.
BUT THIS MARK...
SHF
YEAH...
OH, GOOD.
AKI.
WE'VE GOT THE FORENSIC RESULTS FROM THAT LIGHTER YOU FOUND AT THE APARTMENT.
SHUFF
APPARENTLY IT'S UNMISTAKABLY THE MARK OF A RYUGEN SLAVE.
SO... IS IT REALLY SOME KIND OF... PRANK?
NO... I DON'T THINK SO.
ALSO, THE LIGHTER WAS MANU-FACTURED RECENTLY.
AND IT DOESN'T SHOW ANY SIGNS OF USE. IT'S BRAND NEW.
I KNOW.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
SEEMS LIKE YOU'VE GOT A LOT ON YOUR MIND.
YOU THINK?
YEAH.
ESPECIALLY SINCE THOSE POMEGRANATES SHOWED UP.
YEAH, I GUESS...
IT'S JUST WEIRD.
ALL THESE THINGS I DON'T WANT TO REMEMBER...
IT'S LIKE SOMEONE OUT THERE'S MAKING ME HAVE A LOT ON MY MIND.

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AND THIS IS WHAT THEY FOUND...
!
2 2 HH H
...
YEAH... THIS IS A MESSAGE MEANT ONLY FOR ME.
HUH?
THE LIGHTER...
THE POME- GRANATES ...
ONE MORE THING ABOUT THIS LIGHTER ...
JUST TO BE RE, THEY MANTLED IT AND HECKED INSIDE.
...WHO?
BUT...
SOME- ONE IS TELLING ME NOT TO FORGET WHAT HAPPENED 16 YEARS AGO.

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klunk klunk
HE WAS A SKILLED AGENT, AND SAIGA KNEW HIM.
THE MAN NAMED REN KOSAKA.
...GREW STEADILY WORSE.
THE SHOCK OF HAVING THE VICTIM AT MY FIRST MURDER SCENE BE SOMEONE I KNEW...
DEATH HAD BEEN SO CLOSE.
SHNER
...WAS THAT THOSE TWO ENCOUNTERS WITH THIS MAN...
AND WHAT I DIDN'T KNOW YET...
I'D ONLY MET HIM TWICE IN MY LIFE.
IT'S NOT AS THOUGH WE WERE PARTICULARLY CLOSE.
AND THE SECOND, I'D JUST HAPPENED TO PASS HIM...
THE FIRST TIME, HE'D BEEN JOKING AROUND AND POINTED A GUN AT US.
REN KOSAKA, THE ACTING CHIEF OF INVESTIGATION SECTION 1 OF THE KANTO DISTRICT NARCOTICS CONTROL OFFICE (FORMER NAME).
THAT'S ALL HE WAS TO ME.
A NARC.

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...WOULD THROW MY OWN LIFE INTO CONFUSION.
YOU GOTTA LET IT GO, BABY AKI.
IT'S NOT EVEN OUR CASE.
KRK
IT'S BEEN A WEEK... SINCE THAT DAY...
AND THEY DON'T EVEN HAVE ANY SUSPECTS, LET ALONE A PERP.
I JUST...
AND WE'RE NOT ALLOWED TO DO INVESTIGATIONS OR INTERVIEWS INDEPENDENTLY.
HEAD-ARTERS DOING THEIR BEST. HERE'S JUST...
wha
THERE'S EVIDENCE RIGHT HERE!
NOT TO INDICATE A SUSPECT, ANYWAY.
...NOT ENOUGH CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE.
WHAT'RE YOU GONNA ASK A KID WHOSE PARENTS WERE KILLED RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIS EYES?!
THE KID!
EVERY-THING!
THE KID SAW EVERY-THING!
HE'S GOTTA WANT US TO CATCH THE PERP.
ENOUGH!
AND ALSO...
I...
...
THAT KOSAKA-THAT SOMEONE SO CLOSE TO YOU WAS MURDERED?
DOESN'T IT BOTHER YOU?

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A CAREER OFFICER IS SUPPOSED TO BE ABLE TO SAVE A LOT OF PEOPLE.
BUT YOU CAN'T EVEN GET INVOLVED IN A CASE WHERE THERE'S AN EYE-WITNESS.
YOU'RE NOT DOING THIS FOR THE KID, AKI.
YOU'RE CHASING THIS CASE FOR YOURSELF.
DO YOU FINALLY UNDERSTAND?
COPS...
KRRK
...ARE TOTALLY POWERLESS. AND YOU'RE A COP.
IF YOU THINK THAT SOLVING THE CASE...
...CAN SOMEHOW CHANGE THAT...
YOU'RE DEAD WRONG.
...OF THE DARKNESS THRUST BEFORE ME THAT DAY.
I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO CRAWL OUT...
WHY DID HE LOOK...
HUH...?
I'LL NEVER FORGET HIS FACE...
WHY...
...SO LONELY?
KOSAKA...
SHUFF
WE WEREN'T ESPECIALLY CLOSE...
...WAS JUST A PROFESSIONAL RIVAL.
YOU'RE TAKING TOO MUCH HEADACHE MEDICINE.
IT'S NOT OUR TIME TO PERFORM YET, ANYWAY.
TIK

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SHF
...
SHF
I WANTED TO HELP LOTS OF PEOPLE, BUT I COULDN'T EVEN BRING SOLACE TO ONE BOY.
AKI!
AKI.
THAT'S NOT WHY I BECAME A DETEC-TIVE!
I WANT TO HELP AS MANY PEOPLE AS I CAN, OKAY?!
AM I SUPPOSED TO PRETEND NOT TO SEE PEOPLE SUFFERING BECAUSE OF STUPID REASONS LIKE THAT?
"FINISH YOUR FIELD WORK."
"NOT YOUR JURIS-DICTION."
I WANNA HELP...
MAYBE NOT... BUT STILL...
PEOPLE CAN'T BE HELPED SO EASILY.
BUT STILL, I CAN'T...
I CAN'T JUST SIT BACK AND WATCH.

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I WANT TO CATCH THEM.
IF YOU KNOW SOME-THING...
NO MATTER HOW SMALL IT IS...
COULD YOU TELL ME ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED?
...HMM?
...UCH... ME...
AKIMUNE NARITA.
I'M A DETEC-TIVE.
...
I WON'T LET THE BAD PEOPLE THAT HURT YOUR MOM AND DAD GET AWAY.

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SO THE REPORT
I CRACKED DOWN ON A SEED DEALER NAMED IKECHI...
BUT THERE WAS NO CONNECTION TO HIS SOURCE.
SAME HERE.
Sniff
YEAH... Here it is..
LOOKS LIKE NAKATA THE BUYER ONLY EVER MEETS WITH CUSTOM BIKE
IT'S BEEN OVER A MONTH SINCE WE STARTED OBSERVING SEED DEALERS...
SO DOES THIS MEAN THEY'VE STILL GOT INVENTORY TO SPARE?
YOU PROPOSING WE GET THE BUYERS TO NAME NAMES DIRECTLY? What a pain...
HUH...
THAT'S RATHER SCARY...
HAL...
I CAN'T...
I JUST CAN'T...
WE'RE NOT FINISHED YET.
BUT WE'VE BEEN ON THIS STAKEOUT FOR THREE DAYS WITH NO SLEEP!
I'M SLEEPY... Waaaah
CAN IT!

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IKECHI?
GOT A MINUTE?
GRAB
KA-CHK
!!
DON'T BE SCARED. I'M A NARC.
I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU OUTSIDE ABOUT THE SEEDS YOU'RE SELLING.
...WE COULD BE HASTENING THEIR DEATH.
THAT BY COMING CLOSE TO THE DEALERS ...
AND THE DEALERS WE'RE OBSERVING ARE KILLED...
THE DEALERS THAT THE GANGBUSTERS WERE INVESTIGATING ARE DROPPING LIKE FLIES.
WE CAN'T GET TO THEM.
IF THE CAUSE OF DEATH ISN'T SICKNESS OR ACCIDENT...
GUESS WE'LL HAVE TO USE OUR LAST RESORT.
KA-CHK
OUR LAST RESORT?
POP
HE SAID, "I KNOW IT'S ASKING A LOT, BUT COULD YOU WATCH A LITTLE LONGER?"
Heh heh heh
I DON'T THINK HE'S GONNA BUDGE ON THAT.
OH WELL...
SIGHH

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AND I JUST REPEAT IT OVER AND OVER. PRETTY SOON, I REALLY CAN'T REMEMBER.
IF YOU THINK I'M LYING, TRY ME SOMETIME.
I KNOW THEY SAY PEOPLE CAN GET USED TO ANYTHING...
...
BUT IF I JUST TOOK IT ALL, MY MIND AND BODY COULDN'T STAND IT.
SHF
BUT NOT ME, UNFORTUNATELY.
...THAT'S RIDICULOUS.
...
GULP
JUST WAITING FOR THE PAIN TO GO AWAY ON IT'S OWN...
DO YOU HAVE ANY MEMORIES YOU'RE DESPERATE TO FORGET?
...WHY YOU WOULD'VE SAID SOMETHING LIKE THAT TO ME.
I THINK NOW I WOULD'VE UNDERSTOOD...
HUH?
WELL, I...
I MEAN... WHY DO YOU ASK?
SKREEEE
IT'S A GIFT.
I CAN FORGET ANYTHING, LIKE IT NEVER HAPPENED.
A GIFT?
THERE'S A MOMENT WHEN THE MEMORY TAKES THE OPPORTUNITY TO COME BACK, RIGHT? IN THAT MOMENT...
...I JUST THINK TO MYSELF, "YOU CAN'T REMEMBER."
...

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WHY...?
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'LL ACCOMPLISH BY ABANDONING YOUR FIELDWORK TO LOOK IN ON THIS CASE?
WHY ARE YOU SO CONTRARY?
I GUESS...
THIS CASE HAS THE FIRST VICTIM I'VE EVER KNOWN...
BUT...
SAIGA'S PROBABLY RIGHT... WHATEVER I DO ON THIS CASE WON'T AMOUNT TO MUCH...
DON'T TOUCH ME...
I WANT TO HELP AS MANY PEOPLE AS I CAN, OKAY?!
I JUST THINK I'D REGRET IT...
...WANTING TO DO EVERYTHING I CAN...
...IF I PRETENDED NOT TO SEE ANYTHING.
EVEN IF I DON'T HELP ANYBODY IN THE END...
I WONDER IF THAT WAS JUST SELFISH?
...
THUD
I LIKE TO CALL IT "POSITIVE AVOIDANCE."
SO YOU JUST LIE TO YOURSELF AND RUN AWAY FROM BAD MEMORIES?
KACHUK
I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO COME ALONG.
I'M TELLING YOU NOT TO WASTE YOUR TIME OFF...
SO YOU'RE TELLING ME TO FORGET ABOUT THIS CASE THE SAME WAY?
I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR YOU.
IF MR. CAREER COP GETS CAUGHT UP IN SOMETHING PRETENDING TO BE A DETECTIVE, IT COMES DOWN ON MY HEAD.
...NOSING AROUND IN A CASE THAT'S NOT EVEN YOURS.
...
I'M NOT QUITTING.
...
PRETENDING TO BE A DETECTIVE...
LISTEN, BABY AKI.
THERE ARE 150 PEOPLE IN THE DEPARTMENT, AND IF THEY CAN'T PUT TOGETHER A CASE, WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO ALL ON YOUR OWN?
DO YOU GET IT?

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SINCE THE ACCI-DENT...
I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM BE ANYTHING BUT TERRIFIED...
THE SHOCK OF THE MURDER WAS TOO MUCH.
HE MIGHT NEVER GET BETTER...
TING
...HE'S COMPLETELY LOCKED WITHIN HIS OWN MIND.
RIGHT NOW...

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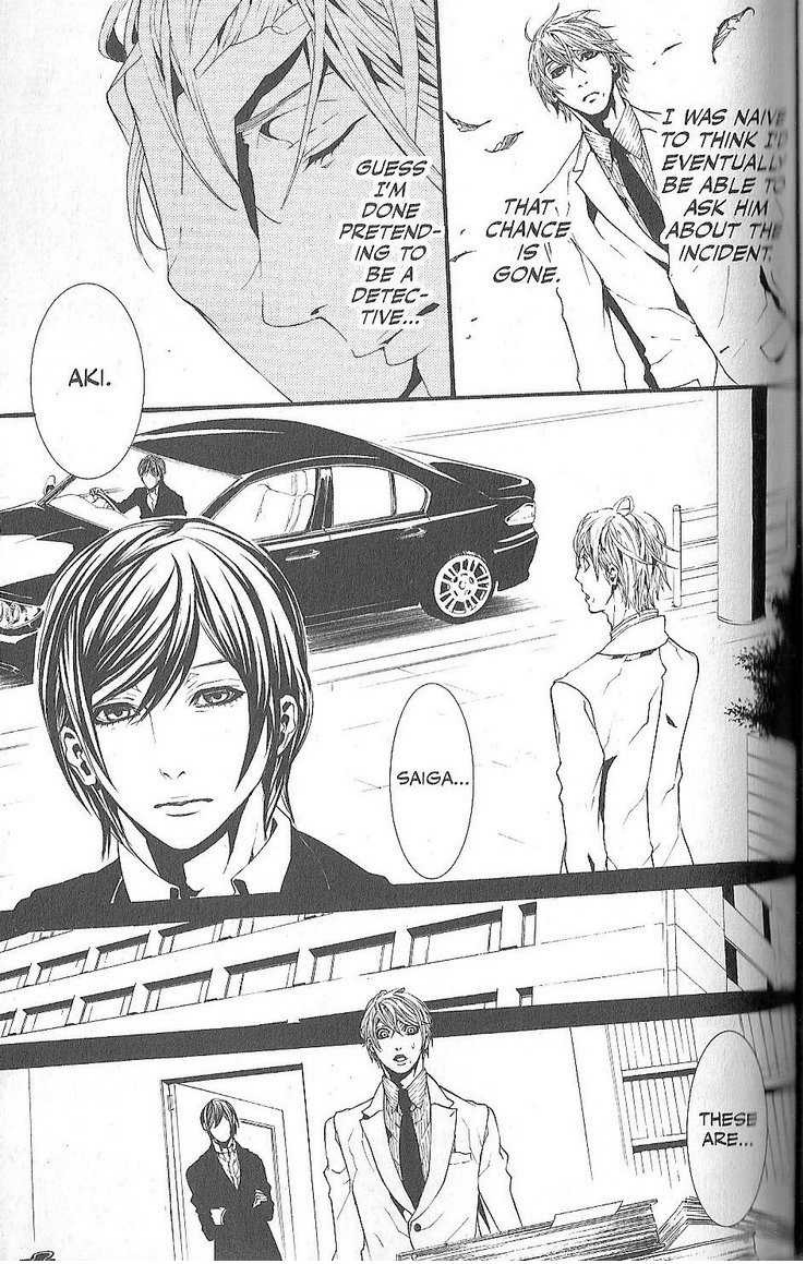
I GUESS I'M DONE PRETENDING TO BE A DETECTIVE...
I WAS NAIVE TO THINK I'D EVENTUALLY BE ABLE TO ASK HIM ABOUT THE INCIDENT.
THAT CHANCE IS GONE.
AKI.
SAIGA...
THESE ARE...

THE SISTER'S FAMILY...
HE'S BEING TAKEN IN...
...BY HIS LATE FATHER'S SISTER AND HER FAMILY.
THAT WOMAN WAS KOSAKA'S SISTER...
BUT APPARENTLY THERE ARE STILL PROBLEMS.
THE BOY'S SUFFERING FROM AMNESIA.
AMNESIA?
I SHOULD'VE BEEN HAPPY HE WAS RELEASED...
...

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BOW
AS LONG AS YOU DO THAT, YOU CAN INVESTIGATE TO YOUR HEART'S CONTENT.
DON'T FORGET ABOUT YOUR FIELDWORK THOUGH!
I UNDERSTAND!
AND REPORT ANYTHING YOU FIND TO ME.
PROMISE ME YOU WON'T LET YOUR INDEPENDENT RESEARCH INTERFERE WITH THE OFFICIAL CASE.
KA
NOW I CAN DO IT!
...
TIK
I COULDN'T GET 'EM ALL, BUT...
KOSAKA'S CASE FILES!
HOW DID YOU...?
I PULLED TOGETHER COPIES OF ALL THE FILES THAT HEADQUARTERS WAS DONE VERIFYING.
I MUST BE GOING SENILE ...
LETTING A ROOKIE CAREER COP GET ME ALL SENTIMENTAL.
SAIGA...
I CAN GET FAVORS IF I PUSH.
HOW MANY YEARS DO YOU THINK I'VE BEEN WORKING HERE?
I'VE GOT FRIENDS AT HQ.
WHATEVER, JUST...
BOW
THANK YOU!

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REN KOSAKA AND HIS WIFE SAE'S ESTIMATED TIME OF DEATH WAS ROUGHLY THE SAME TIME THE SCENE WAS DISCOVERED.
HE WAS SHOT IN THE CHEST AND DIED INSTANTLY.
KO... KOSAKA?
IT'S OKAY NOW.
THEIR SON, KAI KOSAKA...
WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU.
ARE YOU HURT ANYWHERE?
AND...
SAE KOSAKA WAS SHOT SEVERAL TIMES IN THE BACK AND DIED FROM LOSS OF BLOOD.
AND THE BULLETS RECOVERED FROM THE BODIES CONFIRMED MULTIPLE GUNS.
THERE'S POSSIBLE EVIDENCE OF MULTIPLE INTRUDERS IN THE HALLWAY...

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YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?
THERE'S NO MENTION OF IT ANYWHERE IN THE CASE FILES.
BUT THERE'S NOTHING HERE! I'VE CHECKED AND RECHECKED THE FILE!
WELL, THEN I MUST'VE SCREWED UP SOMEWHERE.
IT'S NOT EVEN IN THE CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPHS!
NO, THAT'S NOT IT!
OBVIOUSLY THAT'S NOT THE COMPLETE FILE.
THERE'S NO WAY FORENSICS MISSED IT.
VRRRRR
BEEP
YEAH?
SORRY FOR CALLING SO LATE.
...
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. CALM DOWN.
LOOK, IT'S LATE.
WE'LL CHECK IT OUT TOGETHER TOMORROW.
WHAT'S WRONG?
I WANTED TO CHECK SOMETHING WITH YOU...
WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT LIGHTER WE FOUND AT THE SCENE?
WHAT ABOUT IT?
OH...
...THE ONE THAT WAS DROPPED ON TOP OF THE BLOOD SPATTERS?
SQUEEK
SORRY FOR CALLING SO LATE.
YEAH ...
'SOKAY.
G'NIGHT.

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SOMEONE WHO CAN ELIMINATE EVIDENCE ON A CASE THIS BIG...
WE'RE NO MATCH FOR THAT.
IT CAN'T BE...
YEAH.
AND IT WASN'T SOME TWO-BIT BEAT COP, EITHER.
SOME-ONE SUP-PRESSED IT?
NO ONE WILL BELIEVE US.
WELL, LET'S REPORT TO HEAD-QUARTERS ABOUT IT!
WE KNOW THE LIGHTER WAS THERE!
!
THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT'LL HAPPEN IF WE TRY TO FORCE THE ISSUE.
SORRY, BUT IT'S JUST NOT WORTH IT.
WHOEVER IT IS, THEY'RE CAPABLE OF MURDER.
AFTER ALL... THERE'S NO PROOF ...
SAIGA!
STOP...?
I KNEW I SHOULDN'T HAVE SHOWN YOU THESE FILES.
SHUFF
SAIGA ...
LET'S JUST STOP.
SHUFF SHUFF
...
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?!
SHUFF
!
YOU SHOULD STAY OUT OF THIS CASE.
WHAT DO YOU THINK THAT MEANS?
EVIDENCE WE KNOW EXISTED IS DISAPPEAR-ING.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

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HA HA HA HA HA
AND...
THAT WAS THE FIRST AND LAST I EVER HEARD HIM LAUGH LIKE THAT.
AH HA HA HA HA HA HA
...THE PERSON I'D TRUSTED SO COMPLETELY.
...AT THA MOMEN I STARTE TO DOUBT
...
...

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HEY.
... YES?
IT'S ME.
WELL... JUST LIKE YOU THOUGHT.
LOOK...
I SEE...
JUST AT WORK.
WHAT'RE THE RESULTS?
HEY...
I KNOW WE'RE FRIENDS AND ALL, BUT IF I GET CAUGHT USING THE COLLEGE LABORATORY FOR NARCOTICS ANALYSIS, I'M GONNA BE IN REAL TROUBLE...
I'LL CALL YOU LATER.
SORRY.
YOU'RE TAKING TOO MUCH HEAD-ACHE MEDI-CINE.
YOU JUST HAD SOME A MINUTE AGO.
SIGH
THOSE PILL'S, HE WAS ALWAYS TAKING. THEY WERE...
WHAT WAS I DOING? WHAT DID I WANT TO ACCOM-PLISH?
I DIDN'T KNOW ANY-MORE.
I JUST WANTED TO KNOW THE TRUTH.
THE TRUTH ABOUT HIM...
AND ALSO...
...WHETHER OR NOT HE'D HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE KOSAKA INCIDENT.
...
VRRRR
DID HE ACCEPT SOME-THING?

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I'M SICK OF THIS JOB
I'M JUST NOT CUT OUT TO BE A DETECTIVE, BUT IT'S JUST SO CONVENIENT...
SIGH
I TOLD YOU BEFORE, REMEMBER?
SAIGA...
WHY ARE YOU...
ARE YOU FINISHED...
...AGENT NARITA?
SO YOU DIDN'T LISTEN TO ME TELLING YOU TO STOP. YOU JUST JUMPED IN.
YOU KNEW NOBODY WAS IN THE LIVING ROOM.
AND THE REPORT I TURNED IN TO HQ...
DID YOU CHECK TO MAKE SURE NO ONE WOULD CATCH WIND OF THE LIGHTER WHEN THEY READ IT TOO?
YOU KNEW IT WAS ALREADY OVER.
YOU...
THEY'RE NOT THE TYPES TO MAKE MISTAKES LIKE THAT.
I WAS PRETTY SURPRISED TO SEE IT AT THE SCENE.
DROPPING EVIDENCE LIKE THIS...
YOU TOLD ME TO STAY AWAY FROM THE SCENE.
YOU KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING, BUT YOU JUST STOPPED YOUR CAR IN FRONT OF KOSAKA'S HOUSE.
YOU LIED... YOU SAID THEY WERE PAIN-KILLERS.
twitch
AND THEN WITH YOUR FRIENDS, YOU KILLED KOSAKA.
I DIDN'T KILL HIM!
ALL THEY ASKED ME TO DO WAS CLEAN UP THE SCENE AFTERWARDS.
JUST TO CHECK THERE WASN'T ANY INCONVENIENT EVIDENCE.
BUT BEFORE I COULD GET RID OF IT...
YOU FOUND IT.
YOU KNEW.

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I WAS TOLD TO KILL YOU.
THE GUYS THAT GIVE ME THE DRUGS, THEY SAID NOT TO LEAVE ANY EVIDENCE.
I'M SORRY ...
BABY AKI...
INERTIA KEPT ME DOING THE SAME THING EVERY DAY.
AND THE DESPAIR PILED UP.
I WAS DESPERATE.
BLAM
I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED IN THAT INSTANT VERY WELL.
STIMULANTS ...
...WHETHER I KEPT DOING THE JOB BECAUSE I WANTED THEM...
OR WHETHER I NEEDED THEM BECAUSE OF THE JOB.
I'M NOT REALLY SURE...
PLIP
...FOR GETTING WHAT I WANT.
SO THAT'S IT?
THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED SO BAD THAT YOU KEPT DOING THE JOB?
I'VE BEEN DYING EVERY DAY SINCE I BECAME AN AGENT.
GUESS THAT'S THE PRICE OF SEEING GRUESOME CRIME SCENES, WORKING TO SAVE HUMANITY WHEN IT'S CAPABLE OF SUCH ATROCITY.
HUMANITY ITSELF MADE ME DESPAIR OF LIFE.
BUT WHEN I FINALLY REALIZED IT, I HAD NO MORE COURAGE LEFT.

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I'M SORRY...
"I'M SORRY."
IN THAT MOMENT, I FINALLY UNDERSTOOD THE TRUE MEANING OF THOSE WORDS.
THAT'S RIGHT.
HE'D ALREADY MADE UP HIS MIND...
...TO END IT.

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JUST LIKE YOU TESTIFIED, WE FOUND DRUGS IN SAIGA'S RESIDENCE.
ALSO, THE GUN HE HAD WASN'T POLICE ISSUE.
...
ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THIS MARK?
NO... I'M NOT.
ABOUT THAT...
WHAT ABOUT THIS LIGHTER?
HE SHOULD'VE HAD THE LIGHTER WE FOUND AT THE MURDER SCENE.
shf

DO YOU HAVE ANY MEMORIES YOU'RE DESPERATE TO FORGET?
IT WAS THE LAST THING YOU TAUGHT ME.
THERE'S BEEN PLENTY OF TIME FOR THE MEMORIES OF 16 YEARS AGO TO FADE. I'VE PUT ALL MY EFFORT INTO FORGETTING IT EVER HAPPENED, TO PRESERVE MY OWN SANITY.
HOW TO GET THROUGH THE TERRIBLE THINGS THAT WOULD HAPPEN AFTER THIS...
IT'S JUST LIKE YOU SAID.
BUT NOW...
YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR MEMORY, WITH EFFORT.
TUP
...ARE YOU TRYING TO MAKE ALL THAT EFFORT MEANINGLESS?

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BUT THE NCD ISN'T DISCLOSING ANY INFORMATION, SO THE HOMICIDE INVESTIGATION IS BOGGING DOWN.
EXACTLY.
THERE'S A POSSIBILITY THAT DETECTIVE KOSAKA GOT TANGLED UP IN SOMETHING TRYING TO TRACK IT DOWN.
PEOPLE USING THE DRUG HAVE BEEN DYING SUDDENLY, I THINK.
BUT IF YOU'RE GONNA WORRY, WORRY ABOUT YOURSELF, CAREER-BOY.
YOU CONDUCTED AN UNAUTHORIZED INVESTIGATION DURING YOUR FIELDWORK, AND EVEN IF IT WAS IN SELF-DEFENSE, YOU INFLICTED FATAL WOUNDS UPON THE OFFICER IN CHARGE.
THERE WILL BE CONSEQUENCES.
AT THIS RATE, THE CASE MAY GET SHELVED.
WHAT?!
A MAN WAS DEAD.
I'M SORRY...
BECAUSE OF MY CHILDISH, SELF-CENTERED DESIRE TO "HELP PEOPLE" AND "HAVE NO REGRETS"...
SO YOU THINK THEY WERE INVOLVED IN KOSAKA'S MURDER.
WE CAN'T CONCLUDE THAT YET.
THERE'S NOTHING TO PROVE THIS LIGHTER WAS ACTUALLY AT THE SCENE.
APPARENTLY IT'S THE MARK OF A CERTAIN CHINESE DRUG SMUGGLING SYNDICATE.
THEY'RE A MID-SCALE ORGANIZATION, BUT WE DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THEM.
SAIGA WAS GETTING HIS DRUGS FROM THEM.
ARE YOU SAYING I'M LYING?
NO.
BUT HEADQUARTERS WANTS THIS INVESTIGATION RUN VERY CAREFULLY.
SWITCH...
IT GOES BY "SWITCH."
I'M SURE YOU'VE AT LEAST HEARD THE NAME.
PROBLEMS?
AND THERE ARE SOME... PROBLEMS WITH THIS CASE.
THE DRUG SAIGA WAS ON WAS A NEW ONE.

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PRETTY SOON I REALIZED I WAS SMOKING THE CIGARETTES I USED TO HATE.
"IF ALL THE POLICE IN JAPAN WERE MORE LIKE YOU, I THINK THE PEOPLE YOU ALL HELPED WOULD BE HAPPY."
SAIGA--?
IF ALL THE POLICE IN JAPAN WERE MORE LIKE YOU...
I THINK THE PEOPLE YOU ALL HELPED WOULD BE HAPPY.
...WAS ALSO THANKS TO YOU.
WHAT COULD I HAVE DONE TO SAVE YOU? ARE THERE OTHER PEOPLE OUT THERE SUFFERING, WITH EYES AS LONELY AS YOURS?
"INERTIA KEPT ME DOING THE SAME THING EVERY DAY AND THE DESPAIR PILED UP"
THE ONLY REASON I STAYED HERE...
JUST LIKE YOU SAID, THE DAYS WERE NOTHING BUT HOPELESSNESS AND ISOLATION. THANKS TO YOU, I LIVED IN HELL.
RUNNING AWAY COULD WAIT.
I WOULD STAY HERE AND DO AS MUCH AS I COULD.
BURYING THESE BITTER, NAUSEATING MEMORIES UNDERNEATH MY SENSE OF JUSTICE, I MADE A DECISION.
NARCOTICS USERS DEATH UNCERTAIN
AND THE PRESS WAS CONSTANTLY BASHING THE DEPARTMENT.
AT THE TIME, THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE "SWITCH" DEATHS WAS GOING SLOWLY...
BUT THE FACT THAT AN INVESTIGATOR HAD BEEN USING DRUGS AND WAS SHOT BY A ROOKIE DOING UNOFFICIAL FIELDWORK NEVER CAME OUT.
AFTER MY DISCIPLINARY ACTION WAS OVER AND MY SO-CALLED CAREER FIELDWORK WAS FINISHED...
I GOT BOUNCED AS A KIND OF BURDEN FROM ONE JURISDICTION TO ANOTHER.
I'M SURE THEY DECIDED THEY DIDN'T WANT TO DEAL WITH FURTHER EMBARRASSMENT.
SINCE I WAS "THE ROOKIE BROWN-NOSER WHO'D KILLED HIS INSTRUCTOR," I GOT TREATED AS BAGGAGE EVERYWHERE I WENT, AND I LOST MY FAITH IN BOTH PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS.
SOMETIMES AGENTS WORK ALONE.
DETECTIVE NARITA.
WITH HIS OWN JURISDICTION AND AUTHORITY TO INVESTIGATE INDEPENDENTLY?

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WELL... THE INDIVIDUAL IN QUESTION IS DECEASED, IT SEEMS...
WHATEVER, WHOEVER IT WAS...
YOU CAN'T SURPRISE ME.
THAT'S GREAT NEWS.
SO WHO WAS IT?
THE SENDER WAS "YOSHIASA IGAKI." IT WAS AN ANAGRAM. YOU COULD REARRANGE IT TO SPELL...
...!
THE PRINTS ON THE WAYBILL, THEY WERE...
SKREE
KACHUK
IS THAT WHAT YOU WANTED TO TELL ME?
MAYBE IT WAS WORTH THROWING MYSELF INTO WORK- THOSE AWFUL MEMORIES STARTED TO BECOME INDISTINCT.
AS I DOVE INTO CASES, I SLOWLY STARTED TO MAKE FRIENDS AGAIN.
STILL...
THE POMEGRANATE SAIGA HAD USED FOR HIS DRUG DEALS... THE APARTMENT WHERE I'D DONE MY FIRST BUST...
EVEN THE RYUGEN LIGHTER... SOMEONE WAS THROWING PIECES OF MY PAST BACK IN MY FACE.
BUT WHO?
YOSHITOMO IGAKI. YOSHITOMO IGAKI.
VRRRRRR
GOOD WORK, SIR.
OH? AND?
DID WE GET ANY PRINTS OFF THE PACKAGE?
OR IS IT YOSHIASA IGAKI, HUH?
Heh heh
WELL, AIN'T THAT SNEAKY?

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THE FINGER-PRINTS ON THE WAYBILL BELONGED TO TOKI KURA-BAYASHI.
HE DISAPPEARED 16 YEARS AGO. HE IS CONSIDERED DEAD.
SOME-ONE'S TRYING TO PICK THE LOCK...
GRIN
BEEN LOOKIN' FOR YA, KIDDOS.
...ON THE DOOR TO 16 YEARS AGO.

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WHA?
HUH?
WHY'D YOU BECOME NARCS?
WELL...
UM...
DON'T SCREW AROUND! WE NEED INFO ON SEED, AND THAT'S IT!
WEREN'T YOUR PARENTS AGAINST YOU TAKING A DANGEROUS JOB?
SO WHAT ABOUT YOU, KIDDO?
WHY THE HELL WOULD YOU ASK SOMETHING LIKE-
HOW SERIOUS HE WAS ABOUT IT, AND HOW HONEST.
HOW MANY PEOPLE HE HELPED...
MY MOM'S OLDER BROTHER HAD THIS JOB, AND SHE WOULD TELL ME ABOUT IT ALL THE TIME.
NO... THEY BOTH SUPPORTED ME.
AND...
NO, KAI'ETO, SINCE HE WAS RAISED BY KOSAKA'S SISTER'S FAMILY...
KOSAKA'S SON, KAI KOSAKA...
TOKI KURABAYASHI.
...THE MAN WHO SENT THE POMEGRANATE PIECES TO ME.
THERE'S NO MISTAKING THAT'S HAL'S FATHER... HE DISAPPEARED 16 YEARS AGO.
CAN I ASK YOU GUYS SOMETHING?
THIS CAN'T BE EXPLAINED AWAY AS COINCIDENCE.
BOTH OF THEIR FATHERS WERE INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENT 16 YEARS AGO...
IT'S UNBELIEVABLE...
THE MAN WHO'D BEEN TALKING TO KAI THAT DAY WAS TOKI KURABAYASHI.

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...AND HOW MUCH HE LOVED ME.
I WAS REALLY SAD WHEN I HEARD ABOUT IT...
KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY, THEY SAY.
A TRAGEDY, I'VE HEARD.
YOUR UNCLE... HE...
THANKS TO THE ACCIDENT, I DON'T REMEMBER MY UNCLE.
BUT HE'S STILL A HERO TO ME.
OH...
TO HELP ALL THE PEOPLE HE NEVER GOT A CHANCE TO.
SO I DECIDED THAT I WANTED TO HELP PEOPLE, JUST LIKE MY UNCLE DID.

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TOKI KURA-BAYASHI... THE RED POME-GRANATE...
I CAME HERE...
...TO TELL YOU ONE CRUCIAL THING.
THE LIGHTER... THE MARK OF THE RYUGEN...
NOT QUITE.
SO YOU CALLED US OUT HERE...
...JUST TO WASTE OUR TIME.
THERE'S ONE THING I CAN SAY WITH TOTAL CERTAINTY...
IF EVERYTHING IN THE PAST IS CONNECTED TO THE PRESENT...
AND SEED...
SEEDS...
RED IS THE COLOR OF WARNING.
YOU TWO BE CAREFUL.

WHO, ME?
SUCH AS?
YOU GOT SOME-THING TO HIDE?
WHAT ABOUT YOU, HUH?
YEAH...
TO TELL THE TRUTH...
YOU BOYS ARE QUICK.
OH, WE GOT CONTACT INFO FOR A BOSS.
WE HAVEN'T CHECKED IT OUT YET THOUGH.
HOW'S SEED GOING?
THERE ARE JUST TOO MANY UNCONFIRMED ELEMENTS, SO WE CAN'T BE SURE OF ANYTHING.
SORRY, BOYS.
ACTUALLY...
NYA HA HA
I GOT NOTHIN'!
IT'S ALMOST LIKE WE'RE GOIN' BACKWARDS!
YOU HAIRY SON-UVA...

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THIS IS SOME KIND OF OMEN.
THE INCI-DENT 16 YEARS AGO ISN'T OVER YET.
THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO TELL ME, RIGHT, SAIGA?
TOKI KURA-BAYASHI...
BEEEP BEEP
GO AHEAD ... WHAT?
RIGHT NOW?
NEXT TIME COME WITH SOME REAL INFORMA-TION.
SURE.
WHAT AM I GONNA DO?
DO I SAY IT?
I'M NOT COM-PLETELY SURE, YET...

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RYUGEN?
THE SYNDICATE'S NAME WAS...
THE NUMBER OF STREET-LEVEL DEALERS HAS GONE DOWN.
Huh?
ISN'T THAT...
EVEN WHEN THEIR MOVEMENTS HAVE GOTTEN QUIET AROUND THE YOKOHAMA BRANCH-
WE'VE KEPT TABS ON THEM.
AND THERE'S BEEN STRANGE ACTIVITY RECENTLY.
IF THAT WERE ALL THERE WAS TO IT, SURE.
...A GOOD THING?
ONE-THE SUPPLY OF DRUGS ITSELF HAS DROPPED.
TWO-
OUR INVESTIGATION UNCOVERED TWO REASONS FOR THE DECREASE.

FOUND IT!
COULDN'T BELIEVE IT MYSELF.
WE HAD TO GO THROUGH EVERYTHING FROM THE PACKING MATERIAL TO THE INSIDES OF THE FRUIT WITH A FINE-TOOTHED COMB.
AND?
WE DISCOVERED ONE OF THE SEEDS IN THE POMEGRANATE WAS ACTUALLY A DOSE OF SEED.
IT WAS IN THIS TINY SPACE, HERE...
...
POMEGRANATE...
SEED...
ANYTHING FROM THE DEALER SURVEILLANCE TEAM?
THEY CAUGHT A SINGLE SEED DEALER RECEIVING THE DRUG.
UPON INVESTIGATING THE SUPPLIER, THEY FOUND IT WAS A FORMER MEMBER OF A SYNDICATE.

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WE COULDN'T BE SURE OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP UNTIL NOW.
BUT NOW THERE'S NO MISTAKING THAT THE RYUGEN IS THE SOURCE FOR SEED.
RYUGEN.
SEED. FORMER FACTION.
SEEMS LIKE THAT COULD BE THE SOURCE OF THE CONFLICT.
WHICH IS WHY THE MAIN OFFICE AND THE YOKOHAMA BRANCHES ARE SHARING INFORMATION ON THE CASE.
AND THIS TIME, THEY WON'T GET AWAY.
pat
...WHO'S GONNA DIE.
SAWAKI, THE LEFT ARM.
RYUGEN...

INTERNAL CONFLICT.
SO WHAT STARTED IT?
THE RYUGEN'S GROWN RAPIDLY, AND THE TWO FACTIONS LED BY THE LEADER AND THE FORMER LEADER...
...HAVE BEEN IN OPPOSITION FOR SOME TIME.
A DECREASE IN DRUG SUPPLY?
IT'S LIKE I SAID IN REASON ONE.
STREET-LEVEL DEALERS HAVE BEEN HURRYING TO EITHER ESCAPE THE CONFLICT OR ALIGN THEMSELVES WITH ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER.
EXACTLY.
ALTHOUGH THE ACTUAL AMOUNT DIDN'T DROP.
THE DRUGS JUST GOT SMALLER.
SEED, EH?
IT'S A MEMBER OF A FORMER FACTION.
THE ONE SPREADING SEED AROUND ISN'T, STRICTLY SPEAKING, PART OF THE RYUGEN.
YES.
BUT YOU SAID THE SUPPLIER WAS A FORMER MEMBER, RIGHT?

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SEED IS PROBABLY...
A MEMENTO FROM 16 YEARS AGO...
IT ALL COMES BACK TO SWITCH.
IF THE MEDIA HADN'T GIVEN IT THE NAME, "SWITCH"...
THE PHANTOM DRUG DISTRIBUTED THROUGH POMEGRANATES 16 YEARS AGO...
"SWITCH"... ISN'T THAT...
...THE DRUG THAT KILLED ALL THOSE PEOPLE 16 YEARS AGO BEFORE IT DISAPPEARED?
...MAYBE WE WOULD'VE CALLED IT "SEED" ALL ALONG.
WE'VE GOT TO PLUCK THIS SEED BEFORE IT SPROUTS.
BEFORE ANY MORE VICTIMS PILE UP..
DID YOU KNOW THAT THE RIGHT ARM OF THE RYUGEN'S DRAGON TATTOO ISN'T BLACK?
I'M BETTER OFF DEAD.
SWITCH!
!!
switch.
THAT KID COULD DIE BECAUSE OF YOU SOMEDAY.
HAL.
YOUR DAD'S ALIVE.

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YEAH.
THE RYUGEN, I MEAN.
YOU REALLY WANT TO CATCH THEM, DON'T YOU?
THEY'RE NOT GETTING AWAY THIS TIME.
VRRRRR
GOT A SECOND?
WHAT?
IT'S ABOUT ONE OF THE TWO SURVIVING SEED DEALERS WE HAD UNDER SURVEILLANCE.
AKI...
SO... THE CELL PHONE CONTRACT ITSELF WAS FALSIFIED?
GUESS YOU CAN'T EXPECT THEM TO USE A NUMBER THAT CAN BE EASILY TRACED.
See?
A TOTALLY NORMAL OFFICE WORKER.
CAN'T SEE HIM AS THE TYPE TO BE TRAFFICKING IN SEED.
HUH?!
ALONE AGAIN?!
I can't even go to the bathroom!
JUST TO BE SURE, I WANT YOU TO WATCH HIM FOR A WHILE LONGER.
FWD
IT'S ONE PIECE OF INFORMATION WE CAN PURSUE RIGHT NOW.
IF HE'S JUST AN OFFICE WORKER, FINE.
WE'RE MOVING FORWARD.
OKAY, IBU...
ONCE WE'VE COLLECTED MATERIALS TO SUBSTANTIATE THAT, WE CAN TAKE A DIFFERENT DIRECTION WITH THE CASE.

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HEY, NOW
THIS IS IMPORTANT CRIMINAL EVIDENCE, Y'KNOW.
SURE, BUT...
...THEY'VE GOT SUCH NICE SMILES.
GUESS THAT'S TRUE.
WHEN WE DISMANTLED THE LIGHTER THAT WAS LEFT IN THE APARTMENT...
...WE FOUND A SINGLE PHOTO NEGATIVE.
IT PUT THE FINISHING TOUCH ON THE MEMORY OF 16 YEARS AGO-AS IF WE NEEDED IT.
THAT'S RIGHT... WHO TOOK THIS PICTURE IN THE FIRST PLACE?
A WEIRD ANGLE...
THE ANGLE'S A BIT OFF, AND IT'S LOOKING UP FROM A LOW POSITION...
GIVES IT A NICE SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE.
IT WAS TAKEN AT KIND OF A WEIRD ANGLE, DON'T YOU THINK?
TOKI KIJIRA-BAYASHI, REN KOSAKA AND KAI ETO...
...THE KEY THAT CONNECTED SWITCH.
SWITCH WASN'T FINISHED WITH US...

HE WAS ABOUT TO JUMP FROM A PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE NEAR A TRAIN STATION-
-BUT THE SURVEILLANCE TEAM SECURED HIM.
GUESS WE SAVED ONE FROM DYING, ANYWAY...
WILL YOU BE BACK SOON?
YES. WE'RE DOING A URINE TEST AT HQ NOW.
YEAH...
AKI... THAT PICTURE...
YEAH...
NICE PICTURE.
WE GOT THE FILM THAT WAS HIDDEN IN THE CONFISCATED LIGHTER DEVELOPED.

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ALMOST LIKE...
...IT WAS TAKEN BY A LITTLE KID.
WELL, HURRY UP AND GET OVER HERE.
STAY COOL.
...
I'M GETTING DEPRESSED HANGING OUT ALL DAY WITH THIS GEEZER.
...TO MOVE YOU SAFELY.
IT'LL TAKE TIME TO MAKE ALL THE PREPARA-TIONS...

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WE KNOW THAT HE GOT TO JAPAN.
AKAHA THE RIGHT ARM TOOK THE PRISONER, TOKI KURABAYASHI, OUT OF CHINA.
YES, SIR.
Heh
THAT WILL DO.
CONTINUE YOUR REPORT.
THE NEW DRUG HAS ALREADY BEEN DISSEMINATED AMONG THE OLD FACTION IN LARGE QUANTITIES...
...AND GIVE IT TO THE OLD MEN.
SO HE'S GOING TO TAKE ALL OF OUR SEED...
...WHICH MAKES IT HARD TO RECOVER IT ALL.
WOWIE
LEFT ARM, SIR...
THAT'S A SHAME.
I DIDN'T WANT TO USE VIOLENCE, BUT...
Sigh
DO THEY HATE THEIR LEADER SO MUCH?
SIR...
LORD RYUGEN.
Heh
DON'T CALL ME BY THAT NAME.
UNDER-STOOD... LEFT ARM.
SO WE CAN REST EASY THEN?
IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?
BUT, SIR...
...THE HEAD OF THE RYUGEN IS NEVER HERE. HE'S LIKE A PHANTOM.
USE "LEFT ARM."
OR ANY OF MY OTHER COUNT-LESS NAMES.

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YES.
HE SAID HE HAD IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING THE CONFLICT WITHIN THE RYUGEN.
CAN WE TRUST IT?
HE'S HELPED THE BRANCH OFFICE A LOT.
THEY'VE BEEN WORKING WITH HIM IN YOKOHAMA FOR A LONG TIME.
HE'S BEEN EXTREMELY CAREFUL WITH HIS INFORMATION THIS TIME.
AND HE WANTS TO MEET IN PERSON.
FURTHERMORE, HE WANTS TO MEET WITH SOMEONE WHOSE FACE ISN'T KNOWN AROUND YOKOHAMA.
WHICH IS WHERE YOU TWO COME IN.
BUT...
BACK OFF, OKAY?
HAL!
I MEAN ...
YOU'VE BEEN KINDA OFF...
...SINCE YESTERDAY.
GOT NOTHIN' TO DO WITH YOU.
tmp
tmp
tmp
WAS I RIGHT? THE REASON YOU BECAME A NARC...
INFORMATION FROM AN INFORMER?
YOUR DAD'S ALIVE.

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YOU'LL RENDEZ-VOUS WITH HIM AT A SHOP IN YOKO-HAMA'S CHINA-TOWN.
YOU'RE JUST LISTENING TO HIS REPORT, BUT IT'S STILL A CRITICAL MISSION.
WE KNOW THE AREA, SO WE'LL GET YOU CLOSE.
WE'RE COUNT-ING ON YOU.
YES, SIR!
...
...
BZZT VRRR
BRRRING CHIK
BEEEEP

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